



CONSUMER TIPS

Purchasing a Used Car

Kick the tires and not yourself

Buying a car is one of the most expensive purchases people will make in their lifetime. We all want a good deal, but it is important to remember to do some homework to avoid problems. Whether buying a new or used car, there are some guidelines that can help you make an informed decision.

Used Car Purchase Checklist

- ☒ Ask friends and relatives for recommendations of car dealers.
- ☒ Pre-determine exactly how much you can afford to spend and do not allow the dealership to put you in a higher-priced vehicle.
- ☒ Is the car still under a manufacturer's warranty? If not, factor repair costs into your budget.
- ☒ Have the car inspected by an independent mechanic before buying.
- ☒ Take your time to read and understand the entire written agreement before signing. Be sure that all blank spaces are filled in and that all of the salesperson's verbal promises are included. Be sure that the terms of any warranty that comes with the car are spelled out.
- ☒ Research and compare the price of the car to other similar cars you may be interested in.
- ☒ Discuss trade-ins only after you've negotiated the best possible price of the new car and after you've researched the value of your old car.
- ☒ Test-drive the car on the highway, city streets and in stop-and-go traffic.
- ☒ Ask to inspect the car's title. Pay attention to the mileage.
- ☒ Before purchasing, obtain the vehicle identification number (VIN) and research the vehicle's history with one of the various title data/history services available (e.g. Carfax, AutoCheck, etc.).
- ☒ If you make a deposit on a vehicle, ask whether the money is refundable and under what circumstances. **Make sure that this information is in writing and on your contract.**

Financing Your Purchase? What to Know

You have the choice of financing your car over time or paying in full. If you decide to finance the car, make sure you understand the terms of the loan.

- ☒ Know the exact price of the car, the amount being financed and the total finance charge.
- ☒ Research low interest rate loans from your own bank or credit union and compare your findings with the dealer's offer.
- ☒ Make sure there are no unusual terms in the loan agreement, such as large balloon payments, a larger than usual down payment or requirements that you give back any rebates or incentives to the dealer, any of which will effectively increase the total purchase price of the vehicle.
- ☒ Research your options on prices and financing to help you make an informed and educated decision. Doing so will ensure that you spend most of your time driving your vehicle, as opposed to the time and aggravation of resolving problems with the dealer.